

Smoking and Fires

A guide to prevent fires before they start.

People falling asleep while smoking is the leading cause of fire fatalities in Washington State as well as nationally. Most often fires began when upholstered furniture, mattresses or bedding ignited. The person most often killed, is the person that was smoking.

1 If you Smoke . . . follow these precautions.

- ☐ Never smoke in sleeping areas.
- ☐ Remove all smoking materials from sleeping areas.
- ☐ Do not smoke on or near upholstered furniture.
- ☐ Only smoke when you are awake and alert, never when tired.
- ☐ Use heavy deep ashtrays while smoking.
- ☐ Never smoke while on medications.
- ☐ Never smoke while on medical oxygen.
- ☐ Never smoke when consuming drugs and/or alcohol.
- ☐ Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.

2 Watch for New Technology

Tobacco companies are gearing up to produce a new breed of cigarette that will be less apt to start fires. These fire safe cigarettes either have a lower ability to ignite substances (even though the cigarette burns its entire length) or will self extinguish when left unpuffed for an extended period. They will be sold in Canada and New York where new laws have been created requiring cigarettes to be fire safe.

3 Protect you and your home from fire

- ☐ Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, and outside each sleeping area.
- ☐ Plan and practice an evacuation drill with all members of your family. Keep in mind that young children may not awaken to the sound of the smoke alarm. Make sure your plan includes how to reach your children in the event of a fire.
- ☐ Have an emergency set of car keys and blankets stored near your primary exit.
- ☐ When the smoke alarm sounds, leave your home immediately.
- ☐ Call 911 from a neighbor's home, or use your cell phone once safely outside. Drive to a neighbor's and use their phone if you live in a rural area.

4 Consider not smoking

If you want to stop smoking for your health, your loved ones, or for other reasons, call the **Washington State Tobacco Quit Line (877-270-STOP)**. A trained specialist will provide you with one-on-one counseling and a customized quit plan to help you quit for good. Remember, calling the quit line can double your chances of quitting successfully.

Reference: The case for fire safe cigarettes made through industry documents, M.Gunja, G. Ferrris Wayne, A Landman, G. Conolly, A. McGuire; www.tabaccocontrol.com; Annual Fire in Washington Report, Office of the State Fire Marshal; Department of Health, Quitline.com